

desolate, above the surrounding waters; no trees, shaded their riven sides, but the water-loving mangrove clothed the base of this sterile island, and a coarse, wiry grass was thinly spread over its sides.

“(Feb. 11) . . . Some rather small pigeons (*Petrophila albipennis* Gould), of a dark brown colour, marked with a white patch on the wings, were seen, and some specimens shot. They made a whirring sound in flight, like the partridge, and appeared to haunt the rocks; a habit which all subsequent observation confirmed.”

The anchorage referred to would have been on the easternmost and second largest of the islands now called the Sunday Islands; only the small northernmost islands of the group are still named the Roe Group. The type-locality of *Petrophassa albipennis* Gould may therefore be accepted as the easternmost of the Sunday Islands, 123° 13' E, 16° 24' 30" S., at the mouth of King Sound, north-west Australia. This seems to be the first record of this species' occurrence on an off-shore island. The elucidation of the type-locality casts much doubt upon the validity of Mathews' race *alisteri* (*q.v.*).

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On the Thick-billed Ground Dove *Gallucolumba salamonis* (Ramsay)

by SHANE PARKER

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Nothing is known of the Solomon Islands Thick-billed Ground Dove, *Gallucolumba salamonis*, besides the descriptions of the only two specimens, the holotype from San Cristoval (Ramsay 1882) and a second specimen from Ramos Island between Ysabel and Malaita (Mayr, 1945: 228). The holotype, an adult male, in the Australian Museum, Sydney (registered number A. 13406) was purchased by the Museum of the collector, Mr. John Stephens, in 1883, in a collection of 91 bird skins obtained by Stephens at Wanu on San Cristoval and on the nearby island of Ugi. Stephens' original blue label is now missing, but the date of collection was given by Ramsay (1882: 300) as April, 1882, during which time Stephens was at Wanu or Wano [= Wanga or Wango Bay, 10° 18' S., 15 miles E.S.E. of Cape Recherche, the northernmost tip of San Cristoval, *vide* Findlay, 1884: 842-3] which may be accepted as the type-locality. The second specimen, from Ramos, in the American Museum of Natural History, New York, was obtained by members of the Whitney South Sea Expedition.

It is surprising that the three main collecting parties to San Cristoval since the discovery of this ground dove, Albert Meek's in April-May, 1908 (Parker 1967: 135), the Whitney South Sea Expedition in 1927 and 1929,

and the Oxford University Expedition in 1953 (Galbraith and Galbraith, 1962) failed to encounter it there. Although Meek's San Cristoval bird collection, a small one of about 180 skins from an unspecified locality, was not written up by Rothschild and Hartert as most of his other collections were, I assume that, had there been a specimen of *G. salamonis* amongst Meek's skins, it would have been remarked upon.



Gallicolumba salamonis



Gallicolumba stairi

Heads of *Gallicolumba salamonis* and *G. stairi*, $\times 1$, to show bill sizes.

As *Gallicolumba salamonis* has apparently never been figured, I include a sketch of the head to indicate the bill size as compared to a more typical member of the genus, *G. stairi* of Fiji and Samoa.

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Observations on wildfowl on the Batinah Coast, Muscat and Oman, south-east Arabia 1962-1967

by CARL SETON-BROWNE AND JEFFERY HARRISON

With supplementary observations from Dhofar compiled from notes by Colonel A. D. Lewis and Richard Matson

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Introduction

Attention has recently been focussed on the status and distribution of wildfowl in the Middle East. This was crystallised by Professor H. A. Isakov, representing Russia, at the Second European Meeting on Wildfowl Conservation held in Holland in May, 1966, when he pointed out that